

**SUMMARY OF THE
MEMBERSHIP AND OUTREACH MEETING
JULY 11, 2002**

The Membership and Outreach Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP) met on Thursday, July 11, 2002 at 8:00 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) as part of the Eighth Annual NELAC Meeting in Tampa, Florida. Chairperson Sherry Clay of the Texas Department of Health led the meeting. A list of action items is given in Attachment A. A list of participants is given in Attachment B. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss agenda items that follow.

INTRODUCTION

Ms. Clay introduced herself and asked that committee members introduce themselves and state their affiliation. She opened the meeting by reading the items on the agenda and stating that the meeting would be an open forum for any comments regarding the agenda items or anything else that may be of concern.

CHANGES TO THE STANDARDS

A comment was made that laboratories often have a difficult time keeping track of all the changes to the Standards. A possible solution suggested was to have each new requirement accompanied with explanatory notes, which would help in facilitating learning the changes. Another suggestion made was that the effective date, not the date voted in, should be put on the Standards. The only difficulty with that is that though the Standards are effective two years after being voted on, some states implement the changes sooner than others. Having the effective date appear, rather than the date of ratification, would not apply to everyone.

MEMBERSHIP OF NELAC

An attendee made a comment regarding the high cost of fees when laboratories seek reciprocity from other states. It was felt that this would discourage small laboratories and organizations from joining NELAC. Consensus from the Committee was that NELAC has no authority to address this issue and that laboratories would have to pay the fees when seeking reciprocity whether they were NELAC accredited or not.

A participant made mention of how laboratories are not the only organizations that would like material regarding NELAC. Monitoring organizations are also interested in the NELAC Standards and would like more information. There are national monitoring conferences that NELAC could provide brochures for.

STANDING COMMITTEES

Ms. Clay mentioned the need to help other standing committees in NELAC. Membership and Outreach Committee members should attend other committee meetings to be liaisons rather than inviting other committees to designate a liaison to join the Membership and Outreach Committee. This will ensure that the Membership and Outreach Committee will always be current and up to date with the needs of other committees.

NELAC 101

Jim Webber of New York State suggested that Membership and Outreach should provide educational information for first time conference attendees as well as how to get involved with different committees. Members thought this to be a great idea and discussed having an orientation the first day of each conference to explain what happens at the conference and a brief history. If an orientation could not be set up, a fact sheet could be designed and included in the registration packets. Perhaps conference registration forms could have a box to check if it's the first conference attended. These ideas will be discussed further in future Membership and Outreach teleconferences.

WEBSITE AS A MARKETING TOOL

An attendee mentioned that many small laboratories don't have access to the Internet. Many states have advisory boards that small laboratories participate in, though. Contacting these advisory boards might be a more efficient way in communicating with small laboratories rather than using the NELAC website. It was also suggested that auditors and accrediting authorities could hand out hard copies of NELAC brochures to businesses not able to access the NELAC website. The Membership and Outreach Committee will look further into these comments to determine the best way to contact small laboratories.

Many comments were directed towards the website and how it is not very user-friendly. It was suggested that the website should have a database with lists of analytes and method codes. It was thought that people would frequent the website if this information were accessible.

The website should also have links to information for what each state (NELAC and non-NELAC) requires for certification. This would be very helpful for laboratories. It was noted that EPA cannot do surveys to acquire this information. A participant mentioned that there might already be information out there regarding this topic and suggested the Committee look into it further.

Mike Ciolek asked attendees if the site map located on the NELAC website was helpful. With the reformatting of the website, it had been eliminated. He wanted to know whether or not he should spend the time to put it back on. Attendees and members of the Committee seemed to think that the map had not been very helpful and that Mr. Ciolek should not spend the time in putting it on the reformatted website.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Clay thanked those in attendance for their participation during this meeting. With no further comments from the audience, she adjourned the meeting at 9:00 a.m. EDT.

ATTACHMENT A

**ACTION ITEMS
MEMBERSHIP & OUTREACH COMMITTEE MEETING
JULY 11, 2002**

Item No.	Date Proposed	Action	Date to be Completed
1.	7/11/02	Develop NELAC 101 for future conferences.	Ongoing
2.	7/11/02	Appoint Committee members as liaisons to standing committees.	ASAP
3.	7/11/02	Discuss ways to reach small laboratories and other organizations without internet access	Ongoing
4.	7/11/02	Discuss ways to include on the NELAC website what each state requires for certification.	Ongoing

ATTACHMENT B

**PARTICIPANTS
MEMBERSHIP & OUTREACH COMMITTEE MEETING
JULY 11, 2002**

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